

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-20 (canceled).

Claim 21 (currently amended):        A method for generating a bit stream comprising:  
providing an indexing tree including a plurality of hierarchy levels and each hierarchy level is assigned one or more index nodes, wherein the index nodes contain index data which is sorted in the indexing tree according to one or more predetermined criteria;

designating an index node as a parent node;

designating other index nodes as child nodes, with at least one child node branching off from the parent node and said child node being located in a lower hierarchy level;

inserting index data of the index nodes into the bit stream, whereby, following insertion of the index data of the parent node, the index data of ~~that the~~ a child node ~~which follows~~ a first node after the parent node in the indexing tree on account of the sorting is inserted without information indicating at which position the index data of said child node is located in the bit stream; and

inserting information into the bit stream in each case for ~~the a~~ a child node which does not follow first after the parent node, said information indicating at which position in the bit stream the index data of said child node is located.

Claim 22 (previously presented):    The method according to claim 21, wherein the indexing tree is a Balanced tree.

Claim 23 (previously presented):    The method according to claim 22, wherein the index data is sorted lexicographically in the indexing tree.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method according to claim 21, wherein the index data is inserted into the bit stream according to the depth-first ordering principle.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method according to claim 21, wherein the index data comprises paths of a document structure tree consisting of at least one root node and a plurality of leaf nodes.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, wherein the index data contains the value instances of the paths and the positions of the value instances in the document which is represented by the document structure tree.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, wherein the index data comprises the number of paths in an index node.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, wherein the paths comprise absolute paths which start from the root node and lead to a leaf node.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, wherein the paths comprise relative paths, a relative path of a respective index node being a path relative to another path, previously inserted into the bit stream, of the index node or of an index node of a hierarchy level above the hierarchy level of the respective index node.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method according to claim 29, wherein the paths inserted into the bit stream are the paths of the index node whose index data is inserted into the bit stream as the first index data of a hierarchy level in a reverse sequence to the sequence in which the index data is arranged in the index node.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, wherein the paths comprise description elements of an XML document (XML = Extensible Markup Language).

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method according to claim 31, wherein the paths are XPATH paths of the XML document.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method according to claim 21, wherein the index data is coded in binary by means of a coding method, in particular by means of an MPEG coding method.